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THE
Moderate Presbyter:
OR,
A FORME
OF
CHURCH-GOVERNMENT
ACCORDING
To the Word of GOD.

Published according to Order.



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THE
Moderate Presbyterian

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

To the W. of G. O.

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THE
 Sacred Discipline of the Church
 described in the Word of God, according to the judgement of the godly Ministers of the Presbyterian party, which lived in the daies of *Queen Elizabeth* of blessed
 M E M O R I E.

THe Discipline of Christs Church, that is necessary for all times, is delivered by Christ, and set down in the holy Scriptures. Therefore the true and lawfull Discipline is to bee fetched from them, and from thence alone, and that which resteth upon any other foundation, ought to bee esteemed unlawfull and counterfeited.

Of all particular Churches, there is one and the same right order and form. Therefore also no one may challenge to it self any power over others, nor any right which doth not alike agree to others.

The Ministers of publike charges in every particular Church ought to bee called and appointed to their charges by a lawfull Ecclesiasticall calling, such as hereafter is set down. All these for the divers regard of their severall kinds are of equall power amongst themselves.

No man can bee lawfully called to publike charge in any
 A 2 Church,

Church, but hee that is fit to discharge the same. And none is to bee accounted fit but hee that is endued with the common gifts of all the godly, that is, with Faith and a blamelesse life. And further also with those that are proper to that Ministry wherein hee is to bee used, and necessary for the executing of the same; Whereupon for triall of those gifts some convenient way and examination is to bee used.

The party to bee called must first bee elected, then hee is to bee ordained to that charge whereunto hee is chosen by the Prayers of that Church, whereunto hee is to bee admitted, the mutuall duties of him and of the Church, being before laid open.

The Ministers of the Church are: first, they that are Ministers of the Word. In their examination it is specially to bee taken heed unto that they bee apt to teach, and tryed men, not newly planted and converted to the Faith.

Now these Ministers of the Word, are first Pastours, which doe administer the Word and Sacraments. Then Teachers which are occupied in wholsome Doctrine.

Besides these, there are also Elders, which watch over the life and behaviour of every man; and Deacons which have care over the poore.

Further, in every particular Church there ought to bee a Presbytery, which is a Consistory, and as it were a Senate of Elders. Under the name of Elders here are contained they who in the Churches minister doctrine, and they who are properly called Elders.

By the common councill of the Eldership all things are directed that belong to the state of their Church. First, such as belong to the guidance of the whole body of it, in the holy and common assembly, gathered together in the name of the Lord. That all things may bee done in them duly, orderly, and to edification.

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Secondly, Then also such as pertain to particular persons. First, to all the members of that Church, that the good may enjoy all the priviledges that belong unto them; that the wicked may bee corrected with Ecclesiasticall censures according to the quality of the fault private and publique, by admonishing and by removing either from the Lords Supper, by suspension (as it is commonly called) or out of the Church by excommunication. Then which belong specially to the Ministers of publique charge in the Church, to their calling, either to bee begun or ended, and ended either by relieving or punishing them, and that for a time by suspension, or altogether by deposition.

For directing of the Eldership, let the Pastour bee set over it, or if there bee moe Pastours then one in the same Church, Let the Pastours doe it in their turnes.

But yet in all the greater affaires of the Church, as in excommunicating of any, and in choosing or deposing of Church Ministers, nothing may bee concluded without the knowledge and consent of the Church.

Particular Churches ought to yeeld mutuall help one to another, for which cause they are to communicate amongst themselves.

The end of this communicating together, is, that all things in them may bee so directed both in regard of Doctrine, and also of Discipline, as by the Word of God they ought to be.

Therefore the things that belong hereunto are determined by the common opinion of those who meet so to communicate together, and whatsoever is to bee amended, furthered, or procured in any of these severall Churches, or in all the Churches that belong to that Assembly. Wherein albeit no particular Church hath power over another, yet every particular Church of the same resort, meeting, and counsell ought to obey the opinion of more Churches with whom they communicate.

For holding of those meetings and Assemblies there are to be chosen by every Church belonging to that Assembly, principall men from among the Elders, who are to have their instructions from them, and so to be sent to the Assembly. There must be also a care had, that the things they shall returne to have been godly agreed on by the meetings, be diligently observed by the Churches.

Further, in such Assemblies there is also to be chosen one that may be set over the Assemblies who may moderate and direct them. His duty is to see that the Assembly bee held godly, quietly, and comely. Therefore it belongeth unto him to begin and end the Conference with Prayer, to know every mans instructions, to propound in order the things that are to be handled, to gather their Opinions, and to propound what is the opinion of the greater part. It is also the part of the rest of the Assembly to speak their opinions of the things propounded, godly and quietly.

The Synodical Discipline gathered out of the Synods and use of the Churches which have restored it according to the Word of God, and out of sundry Bookes that are written of the same, and referred unto certain Heads :

Of the necessity of a Calling.

Let no man thrust himself into the executing of any part of Publique charge in the administration of the Word, Sacraments, Discipline, or care over the Poore. Neither let any such sue or seek for any Publique charge of the Church, but let every one tarry untill he be lawfully called.

The manner of entring and determining of a Calling, and against a Ministry of no certaine place, and the desert on of a Church.

Let none be called but unto some certain Charge ordained of God, and to the exercising of the same in some particular Congregation; and he that is so called, let him be so bound to that Church, that he may not after be of any other, or

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depart from it without just and necessary cause, which is to be judged of by those that have lawfull authority so to do.

Let none be called, but they that have first subscribed the confession of Doctrine and Discipline, whereof let them be admonished to have Copies with themselves.

Of the examination of Ministers.

In the examination of Ministers, the testimony of the place from whence they come is to be demanded, whereby it may be understood what life and conversation hee hath been of, and whether he hath been addicted to any Heresie, or to curious and strange questions, and idle speculations; or rather, whether he be accompted sound, and consenting in all things to the Doctrine received in the Church. Whereunto if hee agree, he is also to expound some part of the holy Scriptures twice or oftner, as it shall seem meet to the Examiners, and that before the Conference, and that Church which is interested. Let him also be demanded of the principall Heads of Divinity, and whether he will diligently execute and discharge his Ministry; and in the execution thereof propound unto himself, not his own desires and commodities, but the glory of God, and edification of the Church. Lastly, whether he will be studious and carefull to maintaine and preserve wholsome Doctrine, and Ecclesiasticall Discipline. Thus let the Minister be examined not onely by one Eldership, but also by some greater meeting and Assembly.

Of Election.

Before the Election of a Minister, and the deliberation of the Conference concerning the same. Let there be a day of Fast kept in the Church interested.

Of the place of exercising this Calling.

Albeit it be lawfull for a Minister upon just occasion to Preach in another Church, then that whereof he is Minister, yet none may exercise any ordinary Ministry elsewhere but
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for a certain time upon great occasion, and by the consent of his Church and Conference.

Of the Office of the Ministers of the Word, and first of the Order of Lyturgie or Common-Prayer.

Let the Minister that is to Preach, name a Psalm, or a part of a Psalm (beginning with the first, and so proceeding) that may be sung by the Church, noting to them the end of their singing, to wit, the glory of God, and their own edification. After the Psalm let a short admonition to the people, follow of preparing themselves to pray duely unto God.

Then let there be made a Prayer containing a generall confession first of the guilt of sinne both originall and actuall and of the punishment which is due by the Law for them both. Then also of the promise of the Gospel, and in respect of it supplication for pardon of the said guilt and punishment and Petition of grace promised as for the duties of the whole life; so especially for the godly expounding and receiving of the Word. Let this petition be concluded with the Lords Prayer. After the Sermon let Prayer be made againe first for grace to profit by the Doctrine delivered, the principall heads thereof being remembred; then for all men, but chiefly for the universall Church, and for all estates and degrees of the people, which is likewise to be ended with the Lords Prayer, and the singing of a Psalm as before. Last of all, let the Congregation be dismissed with some convenient form of blessing taken out of the Scriptures, such as is *Num. 6:24. 2 Cor. 13. 13.*

Of Preaching.

Let him that shall Preach, choose some part of the Canonical Scriptures to expound, and not of the Apocrypha.

Further in his ordinary Ministry, let him not take Postills, (as they are called) but some whole book of the holy Scripture,

ture, especially of the New Testament to expound in order. In choise whereof, regard is to bee had both of the Ministers ability, and of the edification of the Church.

He that preacheth must performe two things, the first that his speech bee uncorrupt, which is to be considered both in regard of the doctrine, that it bee holy, sound, wholesome, and profitable to edification, not devilish, hereticall, leavened, corrupt, fabulous, curious, or contentious. And also in respect of the manner of it, that it bee proper to the place which is handled, that is, which either is contained plainly in the very words, or if it bee gathered by consequent that the same bee fit and cleare, and such as may rise upon the property of the words, grace of speech, and suit of the matter, and not bee allegoricall, strong wrested, and farre fetched. Now let that which is such and chiefly which is fittest for the times and occasions of the Church bee delivered. Further let the explication, confirmation, enlargement, and application, and the whole treatise and handling of it bee in the vulgar tongue, and let the whole confirmation, and proof be made by arguments, testimonies, and examples taken onely out of the holy Scriptures, applyed fitly and according to the naturall meaning of the places that are alledged.

The second thing to bee performed by him that preacheth is reverend gravity. This is considered first in the stile or phrase and manner of speech that it bee spirituall, pure, proper, simple, and applyed to the capacity of the people, not such as humane wisdom teacheth, nor favoring of new fanglednesse, nor either so affectate as it may serve for pomp and austentation; or so carelesse and base as becometh not Ministers of the Word of God. Secondly, it is also to bee regarded as well in ordering the voyce, in which a care must be had: that avoiding the keeping alwayes of one time it may bee equall, and both rise and fall by degrees; As also in ordering

dering the gesture wherein (the body being upright) the guiding and ordering of the whole body is to follow the voyce, there being avoided in it all unseemly gestures of the head or other parts, and often turning of the body to divers sides. Finally let the gesture bee grave, modest, and seemly, not utterly none, nor to much; neither like the gestures of Players or Fencers.

These things are to bee performed by him that preacheth, whereby when need requireth they may bee examined, who are trained and exercised to bee made fit to preach.

Let there be, if may it be, every Sabbath day two sermons, and let them that preach, alwayes indeavour to keepe themselves within one houre, especially on the worke dayes. The use of preaching at burials is to bee left as it may bee done conveniently, because there is danger, that they may nourish the superstition of some, or bee abused to pompe and vanity,

Of the Catechisme.

Let the Catechisme bee taught in every Church. Let there bee two sorts, one more large applied to the delivering of the summe of Religion, by a suite and order of certaine places of the Scriptures, according to which some point of the holy doctrine may bee expounded every weeke. Another of the same sort, but shorter, fit for the examination of the rude and ignorant before they bee admitted to the Lords Supper.

Of the other parts of Lyturgie or divine Service

All the rest of the Lyturgie or divine Service consisteth in the administration of the Sacraments, and (by the custome of the Church) in blessing of marriages. The most commodious forme thereof, is that which is used by the Churches that have reformed their discipline according to the word of God.

Of Sacraments.

Let onely a Minister of the Word that is a Preacher, Minister the Sacraments, & that after the preaching of the Word, and not in any other place then in the publicke assemblies of the Church.

Of Baptisme.

Women onely may not offer unto Baptisme, those that are to bee baptized, but the father, if it may bee, or in his name some other. They which present unto baptisme are to bee perswaded, not to give those that are baptized in the names of God, or of Christ, or of Angells, or of holy Offices, as of Baptist, Evangelist, &c. Nor such as favour of Paganisme or Popery, but such, cheifly whereof their are examples in the holy Scriptures, in the names of those who are reported in them to have beene godly and vertuous.

Of the Communion.

Let the time of celebrating the Communion bee made knowne eight dayes before, that the Congregation may prepare themselves, and that the Elders may doe their duty in going to and visiting whom they ought.

Of signifying their names that are to communicate.

Let them which before have not beene received to the Lords Table, when they first desire to come to it, give their names to the Ministers seven dayes before Communion, that care of inquiring of them may bee committed to the Elders: that if there bee any cause of hinderance, there may bee stay made in time, but if there bee no such thing, let them proceed, where need may bee to the examining of their faith before some of the Elders and Ministers.

Every month before the Communion let this whole treatise of Discipline be read in the Consistory, and let the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons bee censured one after another, yet so that the Minister concerning Doctrine, bee censured of Ministers onely.

Let them onely be admitted to the Communion, that have made confession of their Faith, and submitted themselves to the Discipline, unless they shall bring Letters testimonials of good credit from some other place, or shall approve themselves by some other sufficient testimony.

Children are not to be admitted to the Communion before they be of the age of 14 years except the Consistory shall otherwise determine.

On the Sabbath day next before the Communion, let mention be made in the Sermon of the Examination, whereunto the Apostle exhorteth, and of the peace that is by faith: In the day of the Communion, let there be speech of the doctrine of the Sacraments (and especially of the Lords Supper.

Of Fasting.

Let the day of Fasting be published by the Pastor according to the advise of the Consistory, either for supplication for turning away of calamities present, or threatned, or for petition of some speciall grace. Let the Sermons upon the same day before and after noone (as on the Lords day) be such as may be fit for the present occasion.

Of Holidayes.

Holidayes are conveniently to be abolished.

Of Mariages.

Let espousing goe before Marriage: let the words of espousing be of the present time, and without condition, and before sufficient Witnesses on both sides. It is to be willed that the Minister, or an Elder be present at the Spousalls, who (having called upon God) may admonish both parties of their duties: And first may have care of avoiding the degrees forbidden both by the Law of God and man, and then may demand of them whether they be free from any bond of marriage, which if they professie, and bee strangers he

he may also require sufficient testimony. Further also they are to be demanded whether they have been married before, and of the death of the Party with whom they were married, which if they acknowledge and be strangers, he may demand convenient testimony of the death of the other Party. Finally let them be asked if they be under the government of any, whether they whom it concerneth have consented.

The Spousalls being done in due order let them not be dissolved though both Parties should consent. Let the marriage be solemnized within two moneths after. Before the marriage let the promise be published three severall Sabbath daies, but first let the parties espoused with their Parents or Governours, desire the publishing thereof of the Minister and two Elders at the least that they may be demanded of those things that are needfull, and let them require to see the Instrument of the Covenant of the marriage, or at least sufficient testimony of the espousals.

Marriage may be solemnized and blessed upon any ordinary day of publique Prayer, saving upon a day of Fast.

Of Schooles.

Let Children be instructed in Schooles, both in other learning, and especially in the Catechisme, that they may repeat it by heart, and understand it when they are to instructed, let them be brought to the Lords Supper, after they have been examined by the Minister, and allowed by him.

Of Students of Divinity, and beir exercises.

In every Church where it may conveniently be done, care is to be had that some poore Scholars, Studious of Divinity, being fit for Theologicall Exercises, and especially for expounding of holy Scripture, may by the liberality of the godly rich be taught and trained up to preach.

Let that exposition (as often as it shall be convenient to

be had) be in the presence at least of one Minister, by whose presence they may be kept in Order, and in the same sort as touching the manner of Preaching, that publique Sermons are made; which being ended, let the other Students (he being put a part that was Speaker) note wherein he hath failed in any of those things that are to be performed by him that preacheth publicly, as is set downe before. Of whose opinion let the Minister that is present, and is moderator of their Exercise, judge and admonish the Speaker as he shall think meet.

Of Elders.

Let the Elders know every particular house & person of the Church, that they may informe the Minister of the condition of every one, and the Deacons of the sick and poore, that they may take care to provide for them; they are not to be perpetual, neither yet easily to be changed.

Of Consistories.

In the Consistory the most voices are to be yeilded unto. In it onely Ecclesiasticall things are to be handled. Of them, first they are to be dealt with such as belong to the common direction of the Publique Assembly in the order of Lyturgie or Divine Service, Sermons, Prayers, Sacraments, Marriages, and Burialls; Then with such also as pertaine to the oversight of every one and their particular deeds. Further they are to cause such things as shall be thought meet to be registred and written in a Booke. They are also to cause to be written in another book the names of them that are baptized, with the names of their Parents and Sureties. Likewise of the Communicants. Further also are to be noted their names that are married, that dye, and to whom letters testimoniall are given.

Of the Censures.

None is to be complained of unto the Consistory, unlesse first

first the matter being uttered with silencing the parties name, if it seeme meete so to bee done by the judgement of the Consistory.

In private and lesse faults, the precept of Christ, *Mat. 18.* is to bee kept.

Greater and publique offences are to bee handled by the Consistory. Further publike offences are to be esteemed: First, such as are done openly before all, or whomsoever, the whole Church knowing of it. Secondly, such as bee done in a publique place, albeit few know it. Thirdly, that are made such by pertinacy & contempt. Fourthly, that for the heinousnesse of the offence, are to bee punished with some grievous civill punishment.

They that are to bee excommunicated, (being in publique charge in the Church) are to be deposed also from their Charges. They also are to bee discharged, that are unfit for the Ministry by reason of their ignorance, or of some incurable disease, or by any other such cause are disabled to performe their Ministry. But in the roome of such as are disabled by meanes of sicknesse or age, let another bee placed without the reproach of him that is discharged, and further, so as the reverence of the Ministry may remaine unto him, and hee may bee provided for liberally, and in good order.

When there is question concerning an Heretique complained of to the Consistory; straight let two or three neighbour Ministers bee called, men godly and learned, and free from that suspition, by whose opinion hee may bee suspended till such time as the Conference may take knowledge of his cause.

The obstinate after admonition by the Consistory, though the fault have not bene so great, are to bee suspended from the Communion; and if they continue in their obstinacy, this shall bee the order to proceed to their excommunication.

Three

Three severall Sabbath dayes after the Sermon, publicly let bee declared the offence committed by the offender, and the duties done to him, that hee might bee brought to repentance. The first Sabbath let not the offenders name bee published. The second let it bee declared, and with all a certaine day of the weeke named to bee kept for that cause in fasting and prayer. The third, let warning begiven of his excommunicating, to follow the next Sabbath after, except there may bee shewed some sufficient cause to the contrary. So upon the fourth Sabbath Day, let the sentence of excommunication bee pronounced against him, that his Spirit may bee saved in the day of the Lord.

Hee that hath committed great offences opprobrious to the Church and to bee grievously punished by the Magistrates authority, albeit hee professe his repentance in word: yet for the triall thereof, and to take away the offence, let him for a time bee kept from the Communion. Which how often, and how long it is to bee done, let the Consistory according to their discretion determine. After which if the party repent, hee is brotherly to bee received againe, but not untill hee have openly professed his repentance before the Church by consent, whereof hee should have beene excommunicated.

If the Ministers of any publique Charge in the Church commit any such thing, they are to bee deposed from their charge.

The second kinde of Deacons is of distributers, who are they that take the charge for relieving of the poore

Of the Assemblies of the Church.

Particular Churches are to communicate one with another by common meetings and resorts. In them onely Ecclesiasticall matters are to bee handled, and of those, onely such as pertaine to the Churches of that resort.

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Concerning other Churches, unless they be desired, they are to determine nothing further then to refer such matters to their next common and greater meeting.

Let the order of proceeding in them bee this. First, let the survey be taken of those that are present, and the names of those that are absent and should be there, be noted, that they may give a reason at their next meeting of their absence, or be censured by the judgement of the Assembly next.

Let the acts of the last assembly of that kinde be read, that if any of the same remain unfinished, they may be dispatched. Then let those things be dealt in, that are properly belonging to the present assembly. Where, first, the instructions sent from the Churches, are to be delivered by every one in order as they sit together with their letters of credence. Secondly, let the state of the Churches of that resort be considered, to wit, how they are instructed and guided. Whether the holy Doctrine and Discipline be taught and exercised in them, and whether the Ministers of publique charges do their duty, and such like.

Furthermore, they shall determine of those things that do appertain to the common state of all the Churches of that resort, or unto any of the same, which way may be sufficient for the oversight of the Churches. Lastly, if it seem meet, the Delegates present may be censured.

They that are to meet in such assemblies are to bee chosen by the consent of the Churches of that Assembly and conference to whom it may appertain.

Let such onely bee chosen that exercise publique function in the Church of Ministry or Eldership, and which have subscribed to the Doctrine and Discipline, and have promised to behave themselves in all things according to the Word of God. Notwithstanding it may bee lawfull also for other Elders and other Ministers to bee present, and likewise (if the
assem-

assembly think it meet) for Deacons and for students in Divinity, especially those that exercise themselves in expounding the holy Scriptures in the conferences, and be asked their opinions, which in Students is to this end, that their judgements in handling matters Ecclesiasticall, may bee both tryed and sharpened, but they only are to give voyce which are chosen by the Churches, and have brought their instructions signed from them.

If there fall out any very weighty matter to be consulted of, let notice of it be given to the Moderatour of the Assembly next going before, or to the Minister of that Church where the next meeting is to be, the same is to send word of it in due time to the Minister of every Church of that assembly that they may communicate it afore-hand with those to whom it appertaineth, that the delegates resorting to the next meeting, may understand and report their judgements.

In appointing the place for the Assembly, regard must be had of the convenient distance, and other commodities that no part may justly complain that they are burthened above others.

In every such Ecclesiasticall Assembly, it is meet there bee a Moderatour, hee is to have charge of the Assembly, to see it kept in good order, and hee is alwayes (if it may bee conveniently) to bee changed, the choise is to bee in this manner.

The Moderatour of the former Assembly of that kinde, or in his absence the Minister of the Church where they meet, having first prayed fitly to that purpose, is to move the Assembly to choose a Moderatour. Hee being chosen is to provide that the things done in the assembly may bee written, that the delegates of every Church may write them out, and communicate them with the conferences from whence they came.

The Moderatour is also by the order and judgement of the assembly, to give answer either by speech or by Letters, to such as desire any answer and to execute censures if any bee to bee executed.

Further hee is to procure all things to bee done in it, godly and quietly exhorting to meeknesse moderation of spirit and forbearing one of another where need shall be, and referring it to the Assembly, to take order for such as are obstinate and contentious. Lastly, he is to remember them of the next meeting following, with thanks for their paines, exhorting them to proceed cheerfully in their Callings, and so courteously to dismisse the Assembly, before such time none may depart without leave of the Assembly: Therefore, unlesse it bee a plain act, and manifest unto all, if any think himself injured by the lesse meeting, he may appeal still unto a greater, till he come to a generall Counsell; so that he ascend orderly from the lesse to the next greater. But it is to be understood, that the sentence of the Assembly is holden firm, untill it be otherwise judged by an Assembly of greater authority.

Assemblies or meetings are either Conferences or Synods.

Conferences are the meetings of the Elders of a few Churches, as for example of twelve. There are to meet in a Conference chosen by the Eldership of every particular Church, one Minister and one Elder. The Conferences are to be kept once in six weeks.

They are especially to look unto the state of the Churches of that resort and Conference, examining particularly these severall points. Whether all things be done in them according to the holy Doctrine and Discipline of the Gospel, to wit, whether any question be moved concerning any point of Doctrine. Whether the Ecclesiasticall Discipline be duly observed? Whether any Minister be wanting in any of these

Churches, that a sufficient one in due time may be procured. Whether the other Ministers of publique charge in the Church be appointed in every Congregation? Whether care be had of Schooles, and for the poore? Finally, they are to be demanded wherein any of them needeth the advice of the Conference for the advancement of the Gospel amongst them.

Before the end of the meeting (if it shall be so thought good by them) Let one of the Ministers assembled in Conference either chosen by voyce, or taking it by turn, Preach publicly. Of his speech let the rest judge among themselves (the Elders being put apart) and admonish him brotherly, if there be any cause, examining all things according to those rules that are before declared in the Chapter concerning the things that are to be performed by those that Preach.

Of Synods.

A Synod is the meeting of chosen men of many Conferences. In it let the whole Treatise of Discipline be read. In it also (other things first being finished, as was said before) let all those that are present be censured (if it may be done conveniently) and let them also have a communion in and with the Church where they were assembled.

There are two sorts of Synods. The first is particular, which comprehendeth both the Provinciaall and Nationall Synod.

A Provinciaall Synod is the meeting of the chosen men of every conference within the Province.

A Province containeth 24 Conferences.

A fit way to call a Provinciaall Councell may be this; the care thereof (except themselves will determine of it) may be committed to the particular Elderhip of some Conference within the Province, which by advice of the same Conference

may

may appoint the place and time for the meeting of the Provinciall Synod. That Church or Eldership are to bee sent, the matters that seemed to the particular Conferences more difficult for them to take order in, and such as belong to the Churches of the whole Province, which is to bee done diligently, and in good time, that the same may in due season give notice of the place, and time of the Synod, and of the matters to bee debated therein, that they which shall bee sent, may come the better prepared, and judge of them according to the advice of the conferences.

Two Ministers, and as many Elders are to bee sent from every Conference unto the Provinciall Synod. The same is to bee held every half yeare or oftner, till the Discipline bee settled. It is to bee held three moneths before every Nationall Synod, that they may prepare and make ready those things that pertaine to the Nationall. The Acts of the Provinciall Synod are to bee sent unto the Nationall by the Eldership of that Church in which it was holden, and every Minister is to bee furnished with a Copie of them, and with the reasons of the same.

A Nationall Synod or Convocation, is a meeting of the chosen men of every Province, within the Dominion of the same Nation, and Civill Government.

The way to call it, (unlesse it shall determine otherwise) may bee the same with the Provinciall, that is, by the Eldership of some particular Church, which shall appoint the time and place of the next Nationall Convocation, but not otherwise then by the advice of their Provinciall Synod.

Out of every Provinciall Synod there are to bee chosen three Ministers, and as many Elders to bee sent to the Nationall. They are to handle the things pertaining to the

Churches of the whole Nation, or Kingdome, as the Doctrine Discipline, Ceremonies, things not decided by inferior meetings, appeales, and such like. By the order of the same, one is to be appointed, which may gather into one Book, the notes of every particular Church.

Thus much for particular meetings the universall followeth, which is called a generall or Oecumenicall Counsell, which is a meeting of the chosen men of every Nationall Synod.

This Discipline, intituled the Discipline of the Church described in the Word of God as farre as we can judge, is taken and drawn from the most pure fountaines of the Word of God; and containeth in it the Discipline of the Church that is necessary, essentiall; and common to all ages of the Church.

The Synodicall also adjoynd, as it resteth upon the same foundations is likewise necessary and perpetuall. But as far as it is not expressely confirmed by authority of the holy Scripture, but is applyed to the use and times of the Church as their divers state may require according to the Analogie and generall rules of the same Scripture is to be judged profitable for the Churches that receive it. But may be changed in such things as belong not to the essence of the Discipline upon a like godly reason, as the divers estate of the Churches may require.

The forme of Subscription.

The Brethren of the Conference of W. whose names are hereunder-written, have subscribed this Discipline after this manner.

This Discipline we allow as a godly Discipline, and agreeable to the Word of God (yet so as we may be first satisfied in the things hereunder noted) and desire the same to be acknowledged by us to be furthered by all lawfull meanes that by
pub-

publique authority of the Magistrate , and of our Church, it may be established.

Which thing if it may be obtained of her right excellent Majesty, and other the Magistrates of this Kingdom, we promise that we will doe nothing against it wherby the publique peace of the Church may be troubled. In the mean time we promise to observe it so farre as it may be lawfull for us so to doe by the publique Laws of this Kingdome, and by the peace of our Church.

FINIS.
